

AUSTRALIAN LIBRARY & INFORMATION STUDIES¹ (LIS) RESEARCHERS' RANKING OF LIS JOURNALS

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Abstract

The paper describes the processes and the outcomes of the ranking of LIS journal titles by Australia's LIS researchers during 2007-8, firstly through the Australian federal government's Research Quality Framework (RQF) process and then its replacement, the Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative. The requirement to rank the journals titles used came from discussions held at the RQF panel meeting held in February 2007 in Canberra, Australia. While it was recognised that the Web of Science (formerly ISI) journal impact approach of journal acceptance for measures of research quality and impact might not work for LIS, it was apparent that this model would be the default if no other ranking of journal titles became apparent. Although an increasing number of LIS and related discipline journals were appearing in the Web of Science listed rankings, the number was few and it was thus decided by the Australian LIS research community to undertake the ranking exercise.

Background

The recent establishment of a concerted interest in library and information studies (LIS) research by the Australian Library & Information Association (ALIA) has placed research issues on the professional agenda in Australia. This interest was prompted by the detail included in some of the ALIA's award activities and the Association's desire to establish a research fund. It had also been encouraged during the Library and Information Science Education for the Knowledge Age (LISEKA) project in 2001-2¹ aligning this work with Object (c) of the Association's Constitution: "To ensure the high standard of personnel engaged in information provision and foster their professional interests and aspirations".² Among the outcomes of this work, which included the exploration of the educational and professional development needs of information practitioners, was the establishment of the ALIA Research Committee by the ALIA Board of Directors. The Committee's role is

to promote the value of research, to provide advice on the development of REAP and ALIA's role in research in general, to have oversight of the research fund and to recommend recipients of research awards and research activities to be supported by the research fund.³

¹ "Information science" is a term widely used internationally, whereas "information studies" is the term more commonly used in Australia.

Australia's research funding landscape

At the professional education level, i.e university level, the relationship between education and research is now intertwined with new research directions set by the Australian government for its universities.

Until the advent of a new Labor government in November 2007, the development of the Research Quality Framework (RQF) was the proposed new funding model for Australia's university research. The then Department of Education, Science and Technology (DEST) maintained a comprehensive website on developments; however all website information for the RQF was removed by the newly elected Australian government in December 2007. The RQF exercise was formalized in May 2004 when the then Australian federal Coalition government announced the formulation of a quality and accessibility framework for publicly funded research, to replace prior guidelines. The RQF initiative was taken very seriously by most of Australia's universities.

The process to get to near implementation stage involved a number of preliminary stages including the establishment of an Expert Advisory Group (EAG) in early 2005; then the release of *Research Quality Framework: assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia: issues paper*, in March 2005. The feedback from consultations after this release was taken into account with the release of the *Advanced approaches paper* and then the *Final Advice on the Preferred RQF Model* in December 2005, that had also been endorsed by the Expert Advisory Group for the RQF.

At this stage the involvement of the Australian library community had been minimal, although there would have been some indirect feedback through the provision of advice to employing institutions by LIS researchers. The release of the next RQF report covering measures of research impact in September 2006 prompted invitations from DEST for representations from interested parties to a series of Discipline workshops to be held early in 2007. The EAG had by that time been replaced by the Research Quality Framework Development Advisory Group (RQFDAG, or more commonly known as DAG) and a more prescriptive approach to formulating the RQF direction was now evident. It was at this stage that the Australian LIS community became involved.

The RQF and LIS Journal listings by Australian LIS researchers

The requirement that the Australian LIS researcher community rank the journals they use came from discussions held at the RQF panel meeting held in February 2007 in Canberra, Australia. While it was recognised by the DEST officers present at this meeting that the Web of Science (formerly ISI) journal impact approach of journal acceptance for measures of research quality and impact might not work for LIS, it was apparent that this model would be the default if no other ranking of journal titles became apparent. Although an increasing number of LIS and related discipline journals were appearing in the Web of Science listed rankings, the number was few and it was therefore decided that the Australian LIS community attempt to rank journals of importance to its publishing output. The Chair of the ALIA Research Committee undertook to coordinate the project.

A working list of LIS journals used by Australian LIS researchers

A search on ISI Thomson Scientific for Information Science and Library Science titles in 2001 yielded 13 titles.⁴ A similar search carried out in 2006 yielded 54 titles for 2004.⁵

Yet Australian educators and researchers knew that they used a wider variety in titles than the 54 ISI titles listed in 2004, and were interested to see if the titles used would equate with the ISI listings and if not, how any new titles might be categorised. Additionally, it was decided that if the RQF exercise was to rely on only those titles as listed in the ISI database, then (a) the work reflected in them would continue to exclude many significant Australian LIS researcher's papers; and (b) such a listing would lead to a skewing of the publication record since Australian LIS researchers would be forced by the RQF requirements to use the ISI – now Web of Science - titles, even though these titles might not be suitable for their research output.

Rather than start from scratch, an existing list used by researchers at Queensland University of Technology (QUT) was used to 'seed' the development of a consolidated list. The internal QUT list was extracted from an ongoing database of conference and journal rankings and administrative data used to guide publication efforts by LIS staff in the Faculty of Information Technology. The ISI journal impact listings for 2005 were supplied on the QUT list and these data are included in the tables that follow.

The subset list of 114 LIS journal titles was received in May 2007. It was proposed that this list be emailed to Australian LIS educators and researchers. All possible avenues to contact these potential participants were used; the significant methods being the two ALIA research e-lists: ALIA REAP where the number of members was unknown, and the internal e-list used by the members of the ALIA Research Committee, the membership of which was 9. The other significant e-list used was the ISEF discussion list, with 64 members at the time. The members of this latter list comprise an Information Studies Educators Forum and are not necessarily involved in LIS research, nor necessarily members of ALIA. Members of the ALIA Research Committee are deemed to be LIS researchers by deed of the requirement of membership. However members of the e-list ALIA REAP need only be interested in research.

Categorisation of journal titles

It was also necessary to arrive at agreed definitions for a "tiered" approach to ranking the 114 LIS journal titles. This requirement was based on the need to manage the work such that sensible listings would be reached, and the knowledge that the RQF process would require a tiered listing. While at this stage of the exercise the RQF tier definitions had not been finalised, there were indications that the existence of four tiers or categories of preference and use, with 10 titles per tier or category, would be the way forward. The tiered definitions were finalized amongst members of the ALIA Research Committee on 18 May 2007:

- Tier 1: Key research journal reporting significant refereed information research.
- Tier 2: Important journal reporting significant refereed information research or information practice, typically with a particular focus.
- Tier 3: Other important refereed information journals with research or practice orientation.

- Tier 4: Other noteworthy journals of merit for professional or academic development and acceptance at least through editorial board or review.

Seeking feedback

The list of 114 LIS journal titles together with the tier definitions was emailed on 22 May 2007 to the ISEF list, members of the ALIA Research Committee and the ALIA e-list ALIAREAP. Members on these lists were encouraged to pass the email onto colleagues whose input might make a valuable contribution to the study.

By the closing date of Friday 1 June 2007, 9 responses had been received and the analysis of these commenced. In a last attempt to secure further responses, a final email was sent to the ISEF list on 14 June 2007 with a deadline of 18 June 2007. Five LIS research colleagues were targeted separately in the hope that they would respond. A further 2 responses were received as well as an explanation from one group of colleagues that an earlier reply had been a composite effort from their institution. The total number of responses received was 11.

The email requested colleagues to rank the 114 titles supplied according to the set definitions for Tiers 1, 2, 3 & 4. It had been agreed that the respondents were requested to list only 10 titles under each tier. All respondents gave lists in Tier order of their preferred titles. In the final analysis a further 20 titles were added to the list, making 134 titles for analysis. When two of the respondents listed more than 10 titles in some categories, they were asked to reconsider their analysis and return the list with 10 titles for each Tier. This they did. The final analysis of the titles meant that each title was counted once per respondent.

The final journal titles

As the responses were received the data were transferred to a series of worksheets and transcribed tier by tier. The data in Table 1 summarises the number of titles assigned in each tier following an analysis of responses and application of cut offs. This process is described in the next section and the analysis for each Tier follows.

	Tier 1	Tier 2	Tier 3	Tier 4	Titles not used	TOTALS
Final number of titles	13	12	9	8	92	134*
% of total	9.7	9.0	6.7	6.0	68.60	100

*includes 20 titles added by respondents

Table 1: Australian LIS journal rankings - Summary analysis

Analysis

Each tier was analysed in turn such that those journal titles nominated by the respondents had more than one chance of being covered in the final results. However if the journal title did rate in the top 10 of any tier, it would appear only once in the final analysis.

- **Tier 1: Key research journal reporting significant refereed information research.**

Of the final 134 titles listed, 33 (24.6%) were listed in Tier 1. The total number of responses in favour of each title is shown in Table 2 below. The final analysis demonstrated that with a cut off score of 4 hits, 10 such titles were given. When the cut off score was lowered to 3 hits, there were 13 titles. The 13 titles in descending score order are shown in Table 2. All but the title *School Library Media Research* were ISI impact titles in 2005.

JOURNAL TITLE	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004	Tier 1 number of hits
Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology	1.583	2.1	10
Journal of Documentation	0.983	1.5	8
ARIST: Annual Review of Information Science & Technology	2.652	4.3	6
Journal of Information Science	0.747	0.9	5
Library Quarterly	0.688	0.9	5
Library Trends	0.365	0.5	5
Information Processing & Management	1.192	1.3	4
Information Research	0.701	0.8	4
Library & Information Science Research	0.957	0.8	4
School Library Media Research	?	?	4
College & Research Libraries	1.245	1.2	3
Information Retrieval	2.036		3
Journal of Librarianship & Information Science	0.355	0.5	3

Table 2: TIER 1 TITLES

Since both Tier 1 and Tier 2 journals required significant refereeing, it was then decided to transfer all Tier 1 titles with a score of 1 or 2 and not already counted in the Tier 1 analysis, to the Tier 2 data sheet. None of the designated Tier 1 titles appeared on the Tier 2 data sheet.

- **Tier 2: Important journal reporting significant refereed information research or information practice, typically with a particular focus.**

A total of 48 (35.8%) of the 134 titles appeared on the Tier 2 data sheet. The number of Tier 2 hits each title received from respondents is shown in Table 3 following. The additional column in Table 3 shows the transfer of Tier 1 hits (≤ 2) transferred from the Tier 1 analysis. Taking a score of 4 or more hits which includes the hits from the Tier 1 analysis, there were 6 such titles. It was then decided to take a total score of ≥ 3 , and then there were 12 titles. These are shown in descending order of number of hits in Table 3. There were 4 ISI 2005 impact titles in Tier 2.

JOURNAL TITLE	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004	Tier 2 = 1 st preference	Tier 2 – preference transferred from T1
Australian Academic & Research Libraries			6	
Internet Research	0.688		3	2
Journal of Academic Librarianship	0.559	1	3	2
Australian Library Journal			4	
International Journal of Information Management	0.479	0.4	2	2
Journal of Education for Library and Information Science			4	
Interlending & Document Supply	.0431	0.5	3	
Cataloging & Classification Quarterly			2	1
First Monday			2	1
Journal of Digital Information			2	1
Library and Information Research			2	1
School Libraries Worldwide			3	

Table 3: TIER 2 TITLES

- **Tier 3: Other important refereed information journals with research or practice orientation.**

The transfer of titles from the Tiers 1 and 2 data sheets to Tier 3 was a little more problematic because while it was expected that Tier 3 journals would be refereed, the stress on the soundness of this process was not as emphasised as it was for Tiers 1 and 2. However, for discussion purposes, the data was transferred and is shown in separate columns in Table 4 below. Column 3 lists Tier 3 only scores. Column 4 shows the transferred preferences from Tier 2 for titles not listed in that tier, and column 5 shows any transferred preferences from Tier 1 not already listed in either Table 2 or Table 3, i.e. these titles had still not made the cut off score for special mention in either Tier 1 or Tier 2.

Fifty titles were listed on the Tier 3 data sheet. Of these only one, *Aslib Proceedings* stood out with 6 Tier 3 hits. There were five titles scoring 3 x 1st preference Tier 3 hits. All titles with a total score in the three columns of ≥ 3 are shown in Table 4. There are 9 such titles. They are listed below in descending score order. There was one ISI 2005 impact title in Tier 3.

JOURNAL TITLE	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004	Tier 3 – 1 st pref	Tier 3 – pref tferred ex T2	Tier 3 – pref tferred ex T1
Aslib Proceedings	0.333	0.5	6	1	
Libres: Library & Information Science Research Electronic Journal			3	1	1
Access			3		
Orana			3		
Synergy			3		
Scan			3		
d-Lib Magazine			2	0	1
Reference & User Services Quarterly			2	1	
Education for Information			1	2	

Table 4: TIER 3 TITLES

- **Tier 4: Other noteworthy journals of merit for professional or academic development and acceptance at least through editorial board or review.**

All remaining titles that had not been captured in the previous tier analyses were included in the Tier 4 analysis. Taking the Tier 4 count and adding it to the total remaining preferences, it was found that there were 11 titles with a total score of ≥ 3 . These are listed in descending score in Table 5 below. There were 8 ISI 2005 impact titles in Tier 4.

JOURNAL TITLE	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004	Tier 4	Tier 4 – total preferred
Information Technology and Libraries	0.288		2	2
Library Resources and Technical Services	0.512		2	2
Electronic Library	0.26	0.2	2	1
Library Hi Tech			2	1
Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science	0.4	0.3	1	2
Information Society, The: an International Journal	1.018	0.7	1	2
Journal of Library Administration			1	2
Library Management			1	2
Libri	0.192	0.3	1	2
Online Information Review	0.469	0.6	1	2
Scientometrics	1.738		1	2

Table 5: TIER 4 TITLES

Discussion

The decision to use the ranking definitional framework as arrived at by the ALIA Research Committee did not satisfy all participants but was agreed by the majority. Given more time it would have been useful to debate definitional matters more comprehensively. However the RQF was well underway and guidance by them in this regard was scant. It was decided that if Australian LIS researchers were to be part of the RQF debate then they needed to commence the journal ranking process quickly. In the end, were the researchers ranking journal titles through self interest, relevance to them, or indeed “significance” and “importance”? We can only guess.

The low response rate of 11 responses from a possible capture of some 50 - 100 researchers should have been better, although it is noted that at least one response was a composite from a group of LIS researchers.

The cut off of around 10 journal titles for each tier could be seen as a limiting factor in the titles that finally appeared in each list. Of the 134 titles finally considered as candidates for ranking, 45 or 33.6% were eventually chosen for the four tiers.

Interestingly:

- there were 12 ISI 2005 impact titles in Tier 1;
- there were 4 ISI 2005 impact titles in Tier 2;
- there was one ISI 2005 impact title in Tier 3; and
- there were 8 ISI 2005 impact titles in Tier 4.

This meant that 25 ISI listed titles for 2005 were captured, i.e. under half of the LIS titles listed in ISI at that time. How this might compare with international LIS journal

rankings by research colleagues in other countries will be the subject of a further paper.

Re-ranking of Australian LIS journal preference

It was not until after the June 2007 list was compiled that more information on how the “quality” of the journal titles should be judged, came forth from the RQF office. It was evident that whilst the participants of the first LIS analysis understood clearly the requirements for judging the journal titles in round 1, the definitional requirements were not exactly the same as those located from more recent DEST documentation:

1. “Outlets are to be ranked *according to the quality* of the outputs appearing in them, *not their importance* to the discipline....Outlet ranking take place at the discipline level”,⁶ and later:
2. “The ranked journal outlets are not necessarily derived from journal impact factor, but could be with general agreement of the discipline”.⁷

While the guidance given in point 2 above seemed to suit the earlier ranking exercise of the Australian LIS researchers, additional DEST definitions of quality were obtained from the RQF Submission Specifications and other documentation:

1.7.1 Research Quality refers to the quality of original research including its intrinsic merit and academic impact (as opposed to Research Impact which refers to the impact of the research on the broader community).

Academic impact relates to the recognition of the originality of the research by peers and its effect on the development of the same or related discipline areas within the community of peers.⁸

These RQF definitions of quality are displayed in Table 6 following, alongside the Australian LIS definitions. An attempt has also been made in this table to align the tiers of the DEST RQF (Tiers A* to C) and Australian LIS (Tiers 1 to 4) categories:

LIS Tier/DEST Tier	Australian LIS definition	DEST Definition per Research Quality rating scales ⁹
Tier 1/Tier A* (top 5%)	Key research journal reporting significant refereed information research.	Rating 5: research that is world leading in its field or makes an equally exceptional contribution in an area of particular significance to Australia;
Tier 2/Tier A (next 15%)	Important journal reporting significant refereed information research or information practice, typically with a particular focus	Rating 4: research that meets world standards of excellence in its field or makes an equally excellent contribution in an area of particular significance to Australia
Tier 3/Tier B (next 30%)	Other important refereed information journals with research or practice orientation	Rating 3: Research that is recognised internationally as excellent in terms of originality, significance and rigour but which nonetheless falls short of the highest standards of excellence

Tier 4/Tier C (bottom 50%)	Other noteworthy journals of merit for professional or academic development and acceptance at least through editorial board or review.	Rating 2: research that is recognised as methodologically sound in its field and of high originality, significance and rigour
Nil	Nil	Rating 1: research that is deemed to fall below the standard of recognised quality work

Table 6: RQF definitions of quality

Considerable email discussion on these definitional aspects ensued between the Australian LIS educators/researchers; the main issue being that the LIS definitions emphasised “importance” (however each of the respondents viewed this) and the DEST definitions emphasised “quality”. It was noted that the DEST definitions emphasised significance to Australia – a direction followed in the Australian LIS analysis. Due to the short timeframe set by DEST for the final list to be submitted, it was decided that if enough of the participants deemed there to be reasonable congruence in the definitions, then the June 2007 analysis would be redone using the data already to hand, since DEST had made a more generous allowance in the number of titles for each of the categories. There was majority agreement for this direction to be followed.

The percentage distribution of the Tiers meant that there could/would be more than 10 titles in at least the last 3 tiers and that DEST expected 80-90% of preferred titles in the discipline to be covered.

The process then followed was that the journal title list was recovered. By this stage the ISI Web of Science impact figures for 2006 figures were available¹⁰ and these were incorporated within the list (leading to the inclusion of some additional titles in the process). Some of the titles on the Australian LIS journal list were abbreviated, as were those on the ISI Web of Science List. In these cases checks were made against Libraries Australia¹¹ seeking a match of the ISSN as given on the ISI Web of Science List to match titles where this occurred, or to add them as new titles. These were added, in *italics*, so that when the final counts were made, it would be possible to take into account these new titles. Also added, in **bold type**, were the new titles sent in by the respondents to the June 2007 survey. The new total number of titles was 149.

DEST Tier A*

It was also just after the June 2007 compilation that another, and the final, response to the journal ranking exercise was received from an Australian library researcher. The results of this additional response were added to the earlier analysis and were found to consolidate the Australian Tier 1 journals such that there was a clearer delineation of title preference. The earlier Australian LIS journals Tier 1 list had 13 titles. This Tier 1 list could now be further reconfigured such that 10 titles were apparent with a score of 4 or more hits. The updated list was submitted as DEST Tier A*. This result met the DEST title number requirements for Tier A* and the titles in alphabetical order are shown in Table 7 following:

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
ARIST: Annual Review of Information Science & Technology	1.385	2.652	4.3
Information Processing & Management	1.546	1.192	1.3
Information Research	0.870	0.701	0.8
Journal of Documentation	1.439	0.983	1.5
Journal of Information Science	0.852	0.747	0.9
Journal of the American Society for Information Science and Technology (JASIST)	1.555	1.583	2.1
Library & Information Science Research	1.059	0.957	0.8
Library Quarterly	0.528	0.688	0.9
Library Trends	0.545	0.365	0.5
School Library Media Research			

NOTE: Title in **bold** – new title added through LIS colleague feedback

Table 7: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier A*

Only one of the 10 titles listed in Table 7 did not have an ISI impact rating in all 3 years listed.

DEST Tier A

Next, the location of the titles in the earlier Australian LIS journals Tiers 2, 3 and 4 into the categories as outlined by DEST was reassessed. Since DEST allowed more titles into these subsequent Tiers (DEST's Tiers A, B & C) than the Australian LIS community had allowed, this job would need to be redone. The responses from the late submission were also added at this stage.

Those titles that did not make the Tier A* cut were transferred to Tier A and these scores were added to the earlier and previously achieved Tier 2 scores. The number of titles in this Tier was, by DEST definition, to be the next 15% of titles, i.e. 22.35 titles. A cut off score of 3 and above in the Tier A category gave 19 titles and they are listed in alphabetical order in Table 8 below.

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
Australian Academic & Research Libraries			
Australian Library Journal			
Cataloging & Classification Quarterly			
College & Research Libraries	1.164	1.245	1.2
First Monday			
Information, Communication and Society			
Information Retrieval		2.036	
Interlending & Document Supply	0.841	.0431	0.5
International Journal of Information Management	0.754	0.479	0.4
Internet Research		0.688	
Journal of Academic Librarianship	0.516	0.559	1
Journal of Community Informatics			
Journal of Digital Information			
Journal of Education for Library and Information Science			
Journal of Librarianship & Information Science	0.419	0.355	0.5
Library and Information Research			
Libres: Library & Information Science Research Electronic Jnl			
New Review of Information and Library Research			
School Libraries Worldwide			

NOTES: Titles in **bold** – new titles added through LIS colleague feedback

Table 8: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier A

Five of the 19 titles listed in Table 8 have an ISI impact rating taken from the ISI 2006 data.

DEST Tier B

Tier B (the old Tier 3) titles were then calculated using transferred counts from the earlier Tiers where the title had not yet scored a Tier. The number of titles in this Tier was to be, by DEST definition, the next 30% of the total titles, i.e. 45 titles. There were forty five titles remaining that had a score against them, i.e. they had scored at least 1 vote in the respondent's surveys and had not earlier been accounted for, and these 45 titles are listed in alphabetical order in Table 9 below.

Table 9: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier B

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
Access			
Aslib Proceedings	0.444	0.333	0.5
Canadian Journal of Information and Library Science	0.346	0.4	0.3
Collection Building			
Communications of the ACM			
d-Lib Magazine			
Education for Information			
Electronic Library	0.175	0.26	0.2
Evidence Based Library and Information Practice			
Government Information Quarterly	0.448		1.1
Health Information and Libraries Journal		0.48	
Higher Education Research and Development (HERD)			
Information & Management	2.119	1.524	1.8
Information Sciences		0.723	
Information Society, The International Journal	0.803	1.018	0.7
Information Technology and Libraries	0.408	0.288	
International Journal of Electronic Government Research			
International Journal of Information Ethics			
International Journal of Information Policy and Law			
International Journal of Knowledge Management			
International Journal on Digital Libraries			
Journal of Government Information	0.367	0.1	0.2
Journal of Health Information and Libraries			
Journal of Information Ethics			0.2
Journal of Informetrics			
Journal of Knowledge Management			
Journal of Library Administration			
Journal of Management Information Systems	1.818	1.406	1.3
Journal of the American Society for Information Processing & Management			
<i>Journal of the Medical Library Assn – (JMLA)</i>	1.209		
Knowledge Organization	0.296	0.533	0.4
Library Hi Tech			
Library Management			
Library Resources and Technical Services	0.711	0.512	

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
Library Review			
Libri	0.267	0.192	0.3
MIS Quarterly	4.731	4.978	2.9
New Review of Information Behaviour Research			
Online Information Review	0.750	0.469	0.6
Orana			
Portal - Libraries and the Academy	0.614	0.613	0.5
Reference & User Services Quarterly	0.442		0.4
Research Evaluation	0.378		
Scientometrics	1.363	1.738	
Synergy			

NOTES: titles in *italics* = not on original list but present in 2006 Impact Factor data;

Titles in **bold** – new titles added through LIS colleague feedback

Table 9: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier B

Nineteen of the 45 titles listed in Table 9 scored an ISI impact rating in 2006.

DEST Tier C

Tier C comprises the remaining 75 titles, here listed in alphabetical order in Table 10:

Table 10: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier C

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
Advanced Technology Libraries			
Assessment and Evaluation in Higher Education			
Australasian Journal of Information Systems			
Behavior and Information Technology			
Behavioral & Social Sciences Librarian			
Bulletin des Bibliothèques de France			
Campus-wide Information Systems			
Computers & Education			0.6
Computers in Libraries			
Database: the magazine of electronic database reviews			
<i>Econtent</i>	0.183		
El Profesional de la Información			
European Journal of Information Systems		1.093	
Information and Organisation			
Information Development: the international journal for librarians, archivists and information specialists			
Information Economics and Policy			
Information Management, Policies and Services			
Information Outlook			
Information Resources Management Journal			
Information Services and Use			
Information Systems			
<i>Information Systems Journal – Oxford</i>	1.543		
Information Systems Management		0.325	

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
Information Systems Research	2.537	2.054	3.5
Informing Science			
Interfaces: UCLA Journal of Education and Information Studies			
International Information & Library Review			
International Information, Communication and Education (India)			
<i>International Journal of Geographic Info Science</i>	1.360		
International Journal of Human-Computer Interaction			
International Journal of Human-Computer Studies			
International Journal of Information and Communication Technology Education (IJICTE)			
International Journal of Learning			
International Journal of Technology & Human Interaction			
Journal of Computer Mediated Communication			
Journal of End-User Computing			
Journal of Enterprise Information Management			
Journal of Global Information Management			
<i>Journal of Health Communication</i>	1.387		
Journal of Information Law & Technology			
Journal of Information Systems Education			
<i>Journal of Information Technology</i>	1.239		
Journal of Information Technology Education			
Journal of Information Technology Management			
Journal of Interlibrary Loan Document Delivery and Electronic Reserve			
Journal of Issues in Informing Science and Information Technology			
Journal of Library & Information Management			
Journal of Organizational Computing and Electronic Commerce		0.679	
<i>Journal of Scholarly Publishing</i>	0.222		
Journal of Strategic Information Systems		0.579	
<i>Journal of the American Medical Informatics Assn (JAMIA)</i>	3.979		
<i>Law Library Journal</i>	0.508		
<i>Library Collections, Acquisitions & Technical Services</i>	0.312		
<i>Library & Information Science</i>	0000		
<i>Library Journal</i>	0.271		
Library Software Review			
Library Technology Reports			
Management Science			

Journal	ISI impact 2006	ISI impact 2005	ISI impact 2004
New Library World			
Online: the magazine of online information systems	0.484	0.246	0.2
Program: electronic library & information systems	0.422	0.375	0.2
Reference Librarian			
References Services Review			
Research Strategies			
<i>Restaurator</i>	0.200		
Scan			
<i>Scientist</i>	0.296		
Serials Librarian			
Singapore Journal of Library & Information Management			
<i>Social Science Computing Review</i>	0.704		
<i>Social Science Information</i>	0.186		
South African Journal of Library and Information Science			
Technical Services Quarterly			
<i>Telecommunications Policy</i>	0.705		
<i>Zeitschrift für Bibliothekswesen und Bibliographie</i>	0.075		

NOTES: titles in *italics* = not on original list but present in 2006 Impact Factor data;
Titles in **bold** – new titles added through LIS colleague feedback

Table 10: Australian LIS journal rankings, DEST Tier C

Nineteen of the 75 titles listed in Table 10 scored an ISI impact rating in 2006. This count does not include the zero rating for *Library & Information Science*.

Discussion

There remains dissention in Australian LIS educator/researcher ranks regarding the acceptance of this methodology. The matters raised are summarised below. A significant issue encompassed definition. A conceptual discussion along definitional lines would require further input from the participants to decipher what they were really thinking as they made their ranking decisions. The issues raised included:

- how do we define “congruence”, a word used when participants were asked to try and relate the DEST “quality” definitions to those earlier used by the Australian LIS participants when this exercise was started?
- How useful was the DEST definition of “quality” on the one hand and “significance to Australia” on the other? And how do these definitions equate, or not, with “impact” and “relevance”?
- How do we/DEST define “significant”, “important”, “relevant”?
- Did those who voted for the above methodology also participate in the original survey?
- Were there enough participants in the survey to render the results valid? This matter has come to the attention of one author in recent discussions where the selected titles were debated and it was revealed that the enquirer had not participated in the ranking exercises, though knew about them.

- Why weren't certain ISI impact journals in the top lists? This was certainly a matter of debate amongst some participants, not the least highlighted by the poor ranking of a title like *Scientometrics*. But then, how many publishing bibliometricians do we have in LIS research in Australia?
- An underlying theme in the whole exercise was the usefulness and relevance of ISI listings for the Australia LIS researcher. Some participants were supportive of ISI, others not. Yet in fairness to the former, it is believed they still provided their rankings for the journal listings.

All of these concerns remain. Since DEST were pressing the Australian LIS community for their final ranked lists of LIS journal titles, this list, as represented by the titles in Tables 7-10, was sent to the DEST RQF office at the end of November 2007.

A new ERA

On 21 December 2007, the new Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research announced the "Cancellation of research quality framework implementation".¹² As noted earlier, much of the reference to the RQF and its outputs and outcomes have now disappeared from the newly constituted federal department, the Department of Education, Employment and Workplace Relations (DEEWR) website where all reference to "research", except that quoted next, was at the time of writing linked to the former DEST website.

The Education, Science and Training portfolio has a major role in ensuring that the research system operates to maximum effectiveness and delivers real value for the money invested in it. The Department of Education, Science and Training delivers a range of policies and programmes to:

- strengthen Australia's ability to generate ideas and undertake research
- strengthen greater collaboration and linkages between business, universities and publicly funded research agencies
- support investment in, and access to, world class research infrastructure, including information and communications technology, in Australia and overseas
- accelerate the commercialisation and utilisation of public sector research
- develop and retain Australian skills for operating in the fast-paced global economy.¹³

It was noted that this research direction is significantly based on the earlier mentioned document *Backing Australia's ability*. The matter is complicated in that the Minister responsible for "research" is Kim Carr, Minister for Innovation, Industry, Science and Research and that any activity related to him appears on the Innovation, Industry, Science and Research website. Carr has announced an Excellence in Research for Australia initiative:

The Excellence in Research for Australia (ERA) initiative, to be developed by the Australian Research Council (ARC) in conjunction with the Department of Innovation, Industry, Science and Research, will assess research quality using a combination of metrics and expert review by committees comprising experienced, internationally-recognised experts.

"Australia is about to embark on a transparent, workable system to assess the quality of home-grown research. Australia is well known internationally for its research strengths.

"For the first time we will be able to measure our achievements against our peers around the world, and plan the future of research investment," Senator Carr said. ...

The ERA will replace the now defunct Research Quality Framework with a streamlined, internationally recognised and transparent research quality assurance system.¹⁴

Consultation for the ERA initiative is underway and the process is being managed by the Australian Research Council (ARC). The presentations being made by the Chief Executive Officer of the ARC show that a number of the characteristics forecast for ERA have a familiar ring to them. In particular the measures of research activity include research publications where “Examples of metrics include citation and other bibliometrics and numbers of publications in rankings, bands of publishers, journals and other outlets”.¹⁵ The example given for possible journal rating scales in this same presentation is:

Quality profiles for publications	
A*	the top 5%
A	the next 15%
B	the next 30%
C	the bottom 50%

It has transpired that the Australian LIS journal list submitted in November 2007 remained part of the ERA journal list collection as the ALIA contribution. At the same time as the final days of the RQF work was being undertaken, the Australian Bureau of Statistics decided to “update the 1998 Standard Research Classification and replace it with an Australian and New Zealand Standard Research Classification (ANZSRC)”.¹⁶ Library and Information Studies (Group 0807) comes under Division 08 in the new ANZSRC clusters as part of Division 08 – Information and Computing Sciences.

An informal email received by the Chair of the ALIA Research Committee in May 2008 alerted the Australian LIS research community that a revisit of the journal listings was being suggested by ERA and in June 2008 ERA, through the ARC website, requested institutions to submit their views on the journal titles included, or not included, in a number of provisional lists that had been submitted. It seemed that the ALIA list remained for the most part, intact. However closer inspection found that a number of titles had been omitted and that the computing professionals had in tandem updated their own listings, though had noted in their update that “we did not touch any ranks in 0807 but removed one or two which did not belong” (Edwards, pers. comm, 8 July 2008). In consultation with Australian LIS research colleagues, final adjustments and corrections were made to the ERA LIS journal listings and the final LIS list was emailed to ERA on 1 August 2008. It was suggested after this had been done, that the LIS list be further checked for discontinued and merged titles that had not been picked up by the participants. A more thorough check could be done now, but such a time consuming task was not possible at the time, given the ERA deadlines.

Conclusion

The finalisation of the list of Australian LIS journals has been a busy but rewarding exercise for many involved. It is not perfect. Those participants who felt aggrieved by the process have been given another chance through their employing institutions and/or individually, to comment. With the implementation of the new ERA expected in early 2009, we shall then see where the Australian listing of LIS journal titles stands. ERA have announced that something like this whole exercise will be

repeated in a few years to update the journal lists. The Australian LIS researcher community should be better prepared by then and hopefully more will participate.

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⁵ 2004 JCR Social Sciences Edition. (2004). *Journal summary list: information science & library science*. Retrieved March 17, 2006, from <http://jcr17.isiknowledge.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/JCR/JCR>

⁶ Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST). (2007a, October). *Newsletter Research Quality Framework*. Retrieved October 16, 2007, from http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/rqf_newsletters.htm#Newsletters_2007, p. 2.

⁷ Ibid, p3.

⁸ Department of Education, Science & Training (DEST). (2007b). *Research Quality framework: assessing the quality and impact of research in Australia – RQF submission specifications*. Retrieved October 16, 2007, from http://www.dest.gov.au/sectors/research_sector/policies_issues_reviews/key_issues/research_quality_framework/#RQF_Specifications, p. 4.

⁹ Ibid, p. 27

¹⁰ *JCR-Web Journal Summary List*. (2006). Retrieved March 17, 2006 from <http://jcr17.isiknowledge.com.dbgw.lis.curtin.edu.au/JCR/JCR>

¹¹ Libraries Australia. (2007). Retrieved November 1, 2007, from <http://librariesaustralia.nla.gov.au/apps/kss>

¹² Carr, K. (2007, 21 December). *Cancellation of research quality framework implementation*. Retrieved January 8, 2008, from <http://minister.industry.gov.au/SenatortheHonKimCarr/Pages/CANCELLATIONOFR> p. 1

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- ¹⁶ Australian Research Council (ARC). (2008). *ANZSRC*. Retrieved May 7, 2008, from <http://www.arc.gov.au/era/ANZSRC.htm>